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ABSTRACT

A cooperative project between community colleges in the Northeast and the Universities Field Staff International (UFSI) which sought to add an international dimension to existing community college curricula is described. Two objectives of the project are listed: to broaden faculty and administrative interest and skills in international studies; and to develop modular curriculum units for use in existing courses in liberal arts, business, and health and allied sciences. Topics covered in this project description include: (1) background on UFSI; (2) goals of the project; (3) project activities including two one-day conferences, two one-day workshops which focused on specific international issues, a five-day summer institute for faculty development, and the development of learning modules; and (4) benefits of the project for community college education. (DC)

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS VOL. VI NO. 6

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INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION

An Exxon Education Foundation-funded project, "International Dimensions in Community College Education," has sought to add an international dimension to existing curricula in community colleges.

The Project

A cooperative effort between selected community colleges in the Northeast and the Universities Field Staff International (UFSI), the project emphasized two simultaneous objectives: broadened faculty and administrative interest and skills in international studies; and development of modular curriculum units on international issues for use in existing basic courses. Three areas were selected for curriculum development: liberal arts, business, and health and allied sciences.

UFSI is a consortium of seventeen American and foreign educational institutions founded in 1951 to encourage greater awareness and understanding of world conditions. Two of its member universities, Pittsburgh and Brown, were centrally involved in this project. The overseas representatives of UFSI, called Associates, observe and analyze contemporary developments in the countries and regions in which they specialize; write brief UFSI Reports in a clear, nontechnical style on social, political, economic, and cultural trends in their areas; distribute them to universities, colleges, schools, public libraries, U.S. and foreign governments, editors, businessmen, and others interested in international studies; visit universities that are members of the UFSI consortium to teach and consult on current issues in their countries and regions. In this project, Associates worked directly with community college faculty and administrators in conferences, workshops, and institutes and served as consultants in the development of curriculum materials.

Significance

American undergraduates must know more about the cultures and actions of other nations to understand global interaction on such issues as employment, health, and population growth. The project was designed to assist community colleges interested in broadening the worldwide perspective of their students.

Goals

A primary objective of the project was the full involvement and participation of community college educators: administrators and faculty provided policy guidance and supervision; faculty attended conferences, workshops, institutes and helped develop curriculum materials. The first goal--faculty development--was to stimulate interest among faculty and administrators not previously concerned with the international dimension in community college education, to support and encourage faculty already committed to this goal, and to provide, through workshops and a summer faculty institute, specific information and approaches useful to faculty in dealing with international issues in their teaching. The second goal--curricular change--focused on basic courses in three curricular areas--liberal arts, business, and health and allied sciences--and developed teaching modules of a day to a week's instruction that would bring an international or comparative dimension to the core material of the course. Finally, the project sought to be a model of change: project activities and materials were replicable; curriculum materials, once tested and revised, would be widely distributed among community colleges throughout the U.S.

Plan of Action

More than forty community college educators made recommendations for feasible project activities.

1. **General Conferences**
   The project sponsored two general conferences designed to raise the level of awareness among community college educators, to stimulate interest in the project, to discuss ways in which change might be initiated, and to select and prepare participants for the workshops and the summer faculty institute.

Each one-day conference was attended by 30 to 40 participants. One administrator and two faculty members from each interested institution were invited.

Each conference focused on two international issues of current concern and interest. Presentations by UFSI and university specialists in international affairs were followed by (1) discussion and demonstration of readings, film, videotapes, and other instructional resources and (2) a session on how international issues can be integrated into community college education.

2. **Issues Workshops**
Issues workshops focused on a specific international issue. Two workshops were held: Workshop I on Health and Education in Developing Societies, Workshop II on Development and International Trade. The one-day workshops each had 20 participants, drawn from those attending the general conferences and from those expressing special interest in the issue under discussion. As with the conferences, participants obtained travel funds from their colleges. Presentations were conducted in greater depth than those at the general conferences. Subsequent discussion focused on concepts and appropriate instructional materials for presenting the issue in the community college curriculum. Each workshop concluded with a sharing of ideas about how to teach about the issue, with an inventory of resources, and with an agenda for development of additional curriculum materials. Free instructional materials were provided.

3. **Summer Institute for Faculty**
A major obstacle to the introduction of an international dimension in community college instruction is that most faculty have relatively little background in international studies. Thus, the project held a five-day Institute for selected faculty, providing both international content and strategies for transferring that content to the classroom. Twenty participants, drawn principally from faculty attending one or more issues Workshops, applied to attend; the criteria for selection included: the interest and plans of the faculty member as outlined in a brief written statement; the quality of the faculty member as a teacher and leader in the college (to be judged on the basis of an application biography and recommendations from two people--one of them to be an administrator in the applicant's college); and a statement from the participant's institution that he or she would receive some modest support to implement the summer institute experience upon returning to the college.

The Institute focused on broad topics of international concern, examined from several disciplinary perspectives in the humanities, social sciences, and business and economics. The format of the Institute was seminar discussions on selected issues and intensive preparation by individual participants, working with the project's curriculum specialists on ways to translate the new content into their own classrooms. Institute discussion leaders were content specialists from UFSI and from participating universities, as well as a specialist in curriculum development in the international field.

4. **Development of Instructional Materials**
The project developed small learning modules that could be incorporated flexibly into basic courses in community college programs in liberal arts, business, and health and allied sciences. Some of these materials were available for review at the Issues Workshops. Suggestions for other learning units were solicited during the workshops and from members of a materials development committee, composed of community college faculty representing a variety of disciplines. All materials and suggestions were reviewed at the Summer Institute and revised for pilot testing in selected community college classrooms during spring 1984.

Benefits to Community College Education

The project provided stimulation and support for those interested in developing greater international awareness among community college students. It furnished opportunities for faculty and administrators to discuss the substance of international issues, teaching approaches and materials, and strategies for introducing changes in their colleges. Finally, the project supplied tested learning units suitable for incorporation in varied college courses and teaching situations.

For further information, contact the Project Director, Ms. Manon Spitzer, UFSI, Box 150, Hanover, NH 03755.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor
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